



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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Second Deputy Permanent Representative

**Open VTC on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian
Question**

United Nations Security Council

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening today's open VTC. Let me also thank Special Coordinator Mladenov for his valuable and comprehensive briefing on this important issue.

Today's meeting comes at a moment of great uncertainty for the occupied Palestinian territory. The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest challenge we have faced in a generation, with far-reaching health, socio-political, and security implications. It is also accompanied by the worst economic shock since the Great Depression of the 1930s, with repercussions in every country, including Palestine. We commend the solidarity and support between the Palestinian and Israeli authorities sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic and urge both parties to continue to enhance their cooperation. At the same time, the potential for better cooperation will be stymied by continuing illegal settlement activity and the threat of annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

We welcome and fully support the joint appeal by the Secretary General's Envoys to the Middle East to all parties to engage, in good faith and without preconditions, on negotiating immediate cessation of hostilities, sustaining existing ceasefires, and putting in place more durable and comprehensive ceasefires to achieve longer-term resolutions to the conflicts across the region.

The two-state solution is under serious challenge today. In addressing any political reality, solutions must adequately address the needs of all parties. Imposed solutions will not work. We firmly believe that a two-state solution provides the most coherent framework for a democratic Israeli state living in peace and security next to an independent and sovereign Palestine, and would bring stability and prosperity for the wider region.

The deteriorating humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza require immediate action, and the broad support of the international community. Israeli and Palestinian leadership ought to be pragmatic as they pursue the compromise necessary to secure a peaceful and prosperous future for their people. To this end, we reiterate the call for ending the 13-year blockade on the Gaza Strip in the face of COVID-19 and the humanitarian crisis.

Israeli settlements are one of the biggest impediments to the peace settlement. Therefore, we reiterate that all UN resolutions which call for Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories must be enforced. We also call for the immediate and effective application of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which Israel has ratified.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also reiterates its support for principles embodied in the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap. We hope for stability and peace throughout Palestinian territory through the rule of law and the support of the international community.

Excellencies,

Let me conclude by expressing our continued support UNRWA in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We must act collectively to support the Agency, to respond to the public health needs and immediate humanitarian consequences of the pandemic in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. In these times, we encourage the Israeli and Palestinians to immediately come together around the negotiating table in order to restore peace and prosperity to the occupied Palestinian territory and end the pain of the Palestinian people.

Thank you.